

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2(b)

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

20th Session
Kampala, Uganda, 2 – 6 October, 2017

MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

This document is divided into two parts:

- Part I refers to the UNECE work in the field of standardization of fresh fruits and vegetables; and
- Part II refers to the activities of the OECD scheme for the application of international standards for fruits and vegetables.

PART I: UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

Activities of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards since the last session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Work on standards

1. At its 72nd session (9-11 November 2016), the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards adopted:

- Revised UNECE standards for **Annonas, Aubergines, Avocados, Chicory, Garlic, Leeks, Sweet Chestnuts, Table Grapes, Truffles, Sweet Peppers, Citrus Fruit and Apples.**
- **Glossary of Terms used in UNECE standards.**

2. At the 73rd session of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (7-8 November 2017), the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (3-5 May 2017) will submit the following standards and documents, for adoption:

- Revised UNECE standards for **Pears, Tomatoes, Apples, Rhubarb, Cherries, Plums, Headed Cabbages, Fresh Figs, Kiwis and Fennel.**
- **Revised UNECE Standard Layout for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.**

At its May 2017 session, the Specialized Section also:

- continued to work on the list of varieties for apples and the reference list of citrus fruit varieties.
- decided to postpone discussions on ware potatoes to monitor the work on the new Codex standard for ware potatoes.
- mapped the work of the Specialized Section to outline its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- discussed food loss/waste related to the use of standards and agreed to prepare a Code of Good Practice to ensure quality along the entire supply chain and prevent food loss, and to draft a series of 1-page information notes on the role of standards in fighting food loss.
- decided to develop Baseline Quality Requirements to drive sustainability and quality food production and consumption in developing markets by ensuring the supply of quality, non-classified, edible produce.
- continued its discussions on traceability, and agreed to establish a central repository of inspection authorities that issue code marks at export stage, with the aim to improve transparency and traceability
- decided to explore the possibility of developing an electronic quality conformity certificate for fresh fruit and vegetables.

3. For further information on the above and the texts of the UNECE standards, please refer to the following web page: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44976>

Explanatory brochures and posters

4. The UNECE explanatory brochure for sweet peppers was updated in accordance with the revised standard, and the explanatory brochure for persimmons was finalized. Copies of the UNECE explanatory brochures for chilli peppers, persimmons, pineapples, and sweet peppers, are now available free of charge in English, French and Russian from the UNECE secretariat and online at <https://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html>. In addition, UNECE has published explanatory material for whole dried chilli peppers, inshell walnuts and colour gauge for walnut kernels.

5. The Working Party is also working on a series of educational “explanatory posters” depicting quality classes and defects for dried apricots (finalized), inshell pistachio nuts, walnut kernels and inshell walnuts, available at <https://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html>.

Capacity-building and promotion

6. In 2016 and 2017, Working Party 7 had an active pool of 600 experts and outreach to more than 1000 experts. Apart from its 5 regular annual meetings with an annual attendance of 250 experts from United Nations member states (UNECE and beyond), the following capacity-building and promotional events were organized:

- Traceability of Agricultural Produce, 3 November 2015, Geneva, Switzerland
- Culinary event for the 2016 International Year of Pulses in collaboration with FAO, 19 April 2016, Geneva, Switzerland
- Training on cross-border trade in nuts and dried fruit, 11-14 July 2016, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Part I - UNECE

- “No Time to Lose on Food Loss” conference with mini expo, in collaboration with FAO, 10 November 2016, Geneva, Switzerland
- Workshop on agri-trade for sustainable development in South Asia and South East Asia, in collaboration with UNESCAP and AFMA, 28-30 November 2016, Bangkok, Thailand
- Workshop on sustainable cross-border trade of fresh fruit and vegetables, in collaboration with national authorities, 22-24 March 2017, Thessaloniki, Greece
- Farmer’s Market on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of UNECE on sustainable quality production, 26 April 2017, Geneva, Switzerland
- Workshop on cross-border trade of fresh fruit and vegetables, in collaboration with UNDP and several donor agencies, 11-13 July 2017, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

7. Studies included a “Business process analysis of the Export of Dried Grapes (Raisins) from Uzbekistan” and the “Analysis of pre-shipment food loss and the impact of standards in Kenya”.

8. Advisory services were provided to several other countries including Brazil and Namibia. UNECE also contributed to the Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) high level policy forum on “Regional Approaches to Food Safety and Market Access” in Bangkok, Thailand, 31 May- 1 June 2017, and will contribute to the Sustainable Agro Business Forum in collaboration with ESCAP and AFMA (26-27 September, Bangkok, Thailand).

9. UNECE established new partnerships with international organizations and donor agencies while continuing to strengthen its collaboration with traditional partners.

Upcoming Regular Meetings 2017/2018 (Geneva, Switzerland):

- Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat: 6 November 2017
- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: 7-8 November 2017
- Conference on Sustainable Development Goals and Standards: 7 November 2017
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes: 19-21 March 2018
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: 30 April-2 May 2018
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce: 25-27 June 2018

Contact

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PART II: ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

1. The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme, with the support of Kenya (Rapporteur) and Brazil started to develop an OECD Explanatory Brochure on Passion Fruit in 2016. This is the second OECD Brochure which will be based on a Codex Standard. The first explanatory brochure based on a Codex Standard was dedicated to Pomegranates and was published in 2014. The OECD is also discussing with the Codex Secretariat the feasibility of organising a joint workshop in Africa in 2019. Further details will be provided in due time and all interested Codex Member Countries will be invited to participate in the workshop.
2. Albania, Brazil and Croatia officially applied to join the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme. Evaluation missions took place during the summer (June/July 2017) and evaluation reports will be completed and subsequently discussed by all of the OECD National Designated Authorities at the next OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme Plenary Meeting (December 2017). Subject to the approval by the Committee for Agriculture and the OECD Council, these countries could then become official members of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme in early 2018. The Scheme is also finalizing the OECD Guidelines on Quality Inspection which will be approved next December 2017.
3. The Scheme regularly undertakes Peer Reviews on national fruit and vegetables quality inspection systems on a voluntary basis, to examine and assess its performance by experts from other countries under the umbrella of the OECD. The ultimate goal is to help improve policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established international standards and principles. This year the OECD Scheme undertook a Peer Review on the Israeli fruit and vegetables quality inspection system. A final report will be presented for approval at the next Plenary Meeting (December 2017).
4. The Scheme is involved in capacity building activities. These training courses and workshops focus on the implementation of the OECD quality inspection system, interpretation of international standards and on latest developments and challenges in the fruit and vegetables sector. The latest courses were organised in Kenya. OECD is also in talks with UNESCAP to try to organise a joint workshop in Asia. Tentatively the workshop will take place in Bangkok, Thailand on 17-18 November 2017. The Codex Secretariat is always invited to participate and provide information on the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission related to fruit and vegetables standards.
5. The Scheme also holds Meetings of Heads of National Inspection Services (HNIS) of its Members Countries every two years. The objective of these meetings is triple: to facilitate discussions between inspection services on major problems, developments and challenges in the fruit and vegetables sector and quality inspection system; to share and harmonise the application of the OECD Scheme; and to present developments in the fruit and vegetables sector and quality inspection system in the Host Country. The proceedings are available upon request. The latest HNIS meeting was hosted by Italy in October 2016 and the Codex Secretariat attended as Observer.
6. The Scheme regularly provides economic and market analysis of selected fruit and vegetables products for its Members, in order to give an overview on trends, trade volume/value on international trade and forecast for the next season. The analysis is done by experts at the invitation of the OECD Secretariat. In 2016, experts from the Slovak Republic gave an overview on the fruit and vegetables markets situation in their country.
7. The OECD explanatory brochures, guidelines and peer review reports are available from the official website of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme free of charges. <http://www.oecd.org/agriculture/fruit-vegetables/>